

4: Carawan & Carawan B,2-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mr. William Saunders

**THE CULTURAL THING IS SOMETHING THAT
CAN ALWAYS GO ON**

529 When we had the festivals on Johns Island back in the sixties, with the
829 folk from Moving Star Hall, the Georgia sea islands, and the young freedom
545 singers, nothing was happening in isolation. It was a time in history when a
lot was going on—voter registration, awareness, blacks were about being
black. Everything fit in, and the festival was like the tape that brings a lot of
things together. It really kept people's spirits up, and that is what was needed
at that particular time. We needed to draw on each other. The religious as-
pect of it was key. Most of the white community around here really don't
understand the strength of something like that.

● 468 For instance, the Hospital Workers' strike just grew out of that whole
829 thing. The same singing went on in all the things we were organizing. It never
533 changed. It stayed the same. The song is sung according to the mood of the
people that day. And very rarely the same words are used. The tempo is
different depending on whether it's sad or happy. You cannot really capture
that.

529 I think the festivals we did were really a benefit and a strength to the
829 community itself. It was the only legitimate place that blacks and whites
199 could get together. Everybody enjoyed themselves and it was part of our
expression for that time. It would not be workable today, because all of those
things are not in place anymore. You would have to have a different reason.

829 Now you would have it based on culture. If it were to be more than that,
that thrust would have to be defined. When we did it back in the sixties, the
political thrust was already there. We knew exactly who our enemy was. We
didn't have any question about what was right and what was wrong.

But the cultural thing is something that can always go on. And there are
so many young people that have been left out of that era. So if you do it from a
historical perspective, it's workable.